GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4166
ANSWERED ON:28.03.2017
Rare Species
Mahto Dr. Banshilal

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey to find out rare species of plants and animals in the country which are on the verge of extinction;
(b) if so, the details thereof; and
(c) the details of the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government for the protection and conservation of rare plants and animals?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) Yes Sir. Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Botanical Survey of India (BSI) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change conduct surveys of threatened and important species of fauna and flora respectively of the country and document the faunal and floral diversity of the country including the rare ones which are on the verge of extinction.

(b) The Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata published a booklet titled "Critically Endangered Animal Species of India" in March 2011. The booklet provides details of fauna which are critically endangered and on the verge of extinction. The findings of the status survey of rare and endangered species of fauna have been published by the Zoological Survey of India for the last 15 years as mentioned in Annexure A. The Botanical Survey of India has published four volumes of Red Data Book of Indian Plants, (Eds. Jain & Rao, 1984; Nayar & Sastry 1987 − 1990) and Red List of Threatened Vascular Plant Species in India (Rao et al. 2003), which provide information on 1236 species belonging to different threatened categories like Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, etc.

(c) For protection of the interests of flora and fauna, the Govt. of India has established a country-wide protected area network (678 Protected Areas (PAs) including 102 National Parks, 515 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 4 Community Reserves, and 57 Conservation Reserves in different biogeographic regions), which primarily covers habitats of threatened flora and fauna. Moreover, 9 of the 18 Biosphere Reserves in India are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO. Specific areas are designated by the Ministry/ Govt. of India as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs), which are protected under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 (EPA). Several other steps to conserve/protect the wildlife and species of flora and fauna undertaken by the Ministry/Govt. are mentioned below:

(i) The Project Tiger and Project Elephant have been setup for protection of charismatic species and their habitat including associated flora and fauna. The Zoological Survey of India through the Ministry undertake status surveys of endangered fauna in Protected Areas (PAs) and outside Protected Areas (PAs) of the country and suggest government for protection of rare and endangered species. Government of India has formulated various wildlife protection acts for conservation and protection of rare and endangered species in India. There are Ramsar sites of wetland importance and Natural Heritage Sites declared by the Government of India for creating conducive environment for rare species of animals. India is signatory to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). India is also a signatory to many international convention and treaties viz. Ramsar Convention, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Conference of Parties (CoP) etc. which are aiming at conservation of wildlife in the country.

(ii) On the policy front some conservation oriented legislations [Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; National Biodiversity Act, 2002, etc.] ensure protection of threatened species and their habitats. Under the provisions of Section 38 of the National Biodiversity Act, 2002, the species are identified state-wise; Ministry has already issued notifications for 14 states to this effect. Further, the Ministry is in the process of including some prioritised endangered plants, including some that are from the Himalaya, in the relevant Schedule of Wildlife Protection Act (1972) to accord them legal protection.

(iii) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats" has been modified in 2008-09 by including a new component namely "Recovery of Endangered Species" and 16 species have been identified for recovery. Funds for the recovery of endangered species viz. Hangul in Jammu and Kashmir, Snow Leopard in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand, Vulture in Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat, Swiftlet in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Nilgiri Tahr in Tamil Nadu, Sanghai Deer in Manipur and Snow Leopard in Arunachal Pradesh are being provided.

(iv) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence.

(v) The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas.

(vi)The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

(vii) Strict vigil is maintained through effective communication system.
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